

POLICY

Able Gifted and Talented (England), More Able and Talented (MAT) (Wales), Highly Able Learners (Scotland)

Education – Universal

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education Staff

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.



David Horton

Head of Education

Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
‘Establishment’ or ‘Site’	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by The Forum School.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment’s location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.



1. Local School/College Profile [[ADAPT LOCALLY]]

The Forum School is an independent specialist day school providing education for pupils aged 7-19 years with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), associated communication and interaction needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school provides a highly structured, therapeutic learning environment that promotes emotional wellbeing, independence, resilience and positive relationships. Many pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and benefit from personalised learning programmes, therapeutic support and reasonable adjustments to enable them to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. The school works closely with families, local authorities, therapists and other professionals to ensure pupils receive coordinated support. The Forum School promotes a culture of kindness, respect and acceptance where differences are celebrated and every pupil is supported to feel safe, valued and included.

2 Purpose

At The Forum School we believe that every learner should experience teaching that recognises their strengths, nurtures their interests, and supports them to reach the highest levels of personal achievement.

This policy sets out a coherent, organisation-wide approach to identifying and supporting Able, Gifted and Talented

It is rooted in the principles of *high expectations, equity of access, and a culture where achievement is valued and celebrated.*

Our aim is not simply to accelerate learners through curriculum stages, but to create an environment in which curiosity, depth of thinking, creativity, and resilience can flourish. We want learners to become confident, reflective and independent thinkers who understand how to use their talents responsibly and effectively.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all sites, all learners, and all staff working within the education team or broader multi-agency context. It governs practice in:

- identifying Able, Gifted and Talented
- designing high-quality provision,
- engaging families,
- monitoring progress,
- and ensuring leadership oversight.

4. Local Adaptation Requirement

Some sections in this policy are adapted locally. These sections are completed by each site to reflect local operational procedures or national equivalents (e.g.,

safeguarding framework, inspection remit, curriculum/quality framework, data protection contacts).

All local additions are to be accurate, up to date, consistent with national legislation and regulator guidance, and fully aligned with the universal standards in this policy. Where no local adaptation or local equivalent is required, the universal content remains fully applicable.

5. Legal and Regulatory Context

The Forum School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in **Appendices A–C**, which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

6. Definitions

We adopt the well-established distinctions used in Able, Gifted and Talented education:

- **Able** learners: those with the capacity to develop expertise in specific areas.
- **Gifted** learners: those performing at levels well above age expectations in academic subjects.
- **Talented** learners: those excelling in performance fields such as sport, music, or the arts.

These definitions help us design provision that is both ambitious and proportionate. We also recognise the difference between *bright* learners—who may show enthusiasm and accuracy in their work—and *gifted or talented* learners, who often demonstrate deeper insight, originality, rapid conceptual grasp, or creative leaps.

7. Aims

Our ambitions for Able, Gifted and Talented provision are both practical and aspirational. We want all sites to:

- ensure that Able, Gifted and Talented identification is early, fair and based on a broad evidence base,
- create learning environments where stretch and challenge are built into everyday teaching,
- support learners with uneven profiles or co-occurring needs,
- develop personalised pathways that nurture both academic and personal growth,
- promote independence, resilience and curiosity,
- and monitor progress rigorously so that provision remains effective.

Ultimately, we want every learner to feel known, valued and capable of shaping their own learning journey.



8. Identification of Gifted and Talented Learners

Identification is **ongoing**, not a one-off event. Learners' strengths often emerge at different times and in different contexts.

We use:

- teacher/tutor observations,
- work scrutiny,
- formal assessments (e.g., **GL Progress, CAT Testing**)
- curriculum benchmarks (e.g., **National Curriculum** stages)
- learner voice,
- and parent/carer insight.

We look for indicators such as creativity, problem-solving, advanced reasoning, unusual insight, rapid grasp of new concepts, or exceptional performance in a specific field.

A site Able Gifted and Talented register is maintained and reviewed regularly. Identification is inclusive; it accounts for learners whose gifts may be masked by additional needs or social/emotional vulnerabilities.

9. Early Identification & Vulnerability to Under-Achievement

Some Able, Gifted and Talented learners thrive early *whilst* others may struggle with frustration, boredom, perfectionism or fear of failure. A learner who is cognitively advanced may still be emotionally or socially in line with their chronological age.

Because of this complexity, early identification allows staff to:

- prevent under-achievement,
- strengthen self-esteem,
- teach coping strategies,
- and plan provision that is both challenging and sensitive to individual needs.

Where psychometric tools such as **WISC-IVUK** are used they serve as *one* source of insight—not a label—and are always interpreted alongside classroom evidence.

10. Teaching and Learning

We take a *classroom-first approach*: the most significant provision for Able Gifted and Talented learners happens in the everyday learning environment.

Teachers plan for:

- rich, challenging tasks,
- opportunities for independence,
- open-ended questions,
- enquiry-based learning,
- and personalised targets (including PLPs where used)



Enrichment and extension complement, but do not replace, high-quality everyday teaching. Creative arts opportunities, competitions, and educational visits give learners further breadth and depth.

We also recognise that Able Gifted and Talented learners may experience social or emotional challenges. Teachers/tutors create environments where learners are encouraged, coached, and supported to take risks and learn from mistakes.

11. Leadership and Management

Each site designates a Gifted & Talented Lead, responsible for:

- maintaining and reviewing the Able Gifted and Talented register
- monitoring provision across the curriculum,
- supporting teachers through advice and training,
- evaluating impact,
- and engaging parents/guardians/carers and the wider multi-agency team.

The SENCO works closely with the Able Gifted and Talented Lead where learners have dual or spiky profiles.

13. Monitoring, Standards and Review

High aspirations must translate into high outcomes. Sites therefore:

- track progress using their assessment systems
- review Able Gifted and Talented provision termly,
- collect learner voice and parental feedback,
- and report impact to senior leaders and governance.

Provision is adapted in response to ongoing evaluation.

14. Curriculum Entitlement and Choice

Learners should have opportunities to pursue areas of strength, experience appropriate stretch, and work at a level that reflects their ability rather than simply their age. Curriculum organisation should therefore allow flexibility, enrichment and personalised pathways.

15. Assessment for Learning

Assessment is used thoughtfully to guide next steps. Learners benefit from:

- clear success criteria,
- regular, purposeful feedback,
- opportunities to self-assess and peer-assess,
- and a shared understanding of their targets.

16. Transfer and Transition



Information about Able Gifted and Talented learners moves with them—between classes, year groups and schools/colleges—to ensure continuity, early support and early challenge. Receiving settings should know what the learner excels in, what support they need, and how they best learn.

17. Ethos and Pastoral Care

Achievement is celebrated across a wide range of abilities. Equally, we recognise that emotional wellbeing is essential for Able Gifted and Talented learners to thrive. Staff build relationships that support confidence and resilience, especially where learners may mask difficulties or worry about being different from peers.

18. Related Policies

Curriculum
Planning Policy
Teaching and Learning Policy
Marking and Feedback Policy
Assessment Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Data Protection Policy
Inclusion Policy

Appendix A — England

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning **Able, Gifted & Talented (AG&T)** in England.

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted)

- **Means:** Sets how Ofsted evaluates quality of education, including ambition and stretch for all Learners across phases.
 - **Requires:** Sites evidence curriculum intent/implementation/impact that **challenges the most able** and secures strong progress.
 - **Our stance:** Build in daily stretch (depth, pace, independence) for AG&T within schemes, not bolt-ons.
 - **Implementation example:** Department plans show tiered tasks, mastery extensions, and work scrutiny for AG&T cohorts each term.
- Links:**
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

Equality Act 2010 (General & Education duties)

- **Means:** Prohibits discrimination and requires **reasonable adjustments**; applies to all schools and colleges.
- **Requires:** Leaders ensure high-ability Learners with disabilities (including dual/multiple exceptionality) can access challenge on an equal basis.



- **Our stance:** Plan AG&T enrichment with accessibility built in; record adjustments where needed.
 - **Implementation example:** AG&T register flags DME Learners; lesson adaptations and outcomes evidenced on seating plans and feedback samples.
- Links:**
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>

SEND Code of Practice (0–25)

- **Means:** Statutory guidance on identifying and supporting SEND; relevant when AG&T overlaps with SEND (Dual or Multiple Exceptional Learners).
- **Requires:** Use the graduated approach; coordinate SENCO with AG&T Lead so support does not dilute stretch.
- **Our stance:** Dual or Multiple Exceptional Learners keep high expectations; support and challenge run together.
- **Implementation example:** For Dual or Multiple Exceptional Learners, PLP targets pair access adjustments with explicit extension goals and evidence of impact.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 — Part 1 (if independent)

- **Means:** Legal standards for quality of education in independent schools (curriculum, teaching, assessment, progress).
 - **Requires:** Provide a planned curriculum and teaching that enable good progress for all, including the most able.
 - **Our stance:** Map AG&T stretch and assessment to Part 1 expectations; governors/Proprietor monitor.
 - **Implementation example:** Curriculum policy shows AG&T pathways; internal reviews chart progress trends for AG&T vs cohort.
- Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283>

Appendix B — Wales

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning **More Able and Talented (MAT)** in Wales.”

Estyn inspection framework

- **Means:** Sets how Estyn inspects quality, progress and provision; inspectors consider ambition and challenge for all Learners.
- **Requires:** Show curriculum planning and pedagogy that stretch MAT and track outcomes over time.
- **Our stance:** Use Estyn handbooks to align MAT practice with “what we inspect”; keep evidence concise and live.



- **Implementation example:** Virtual Inspection Room pack includes MAT cohort progress data, samples of extended outcomes, and learner voice.

Links:

- <https://estyn.gov.wales/inspection-guidance-resources/>

Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (Statutory)

- **Means:** Statutory Code for identifying and meeting Additional Learning Needs (ALN); relevant when MAT coexists with ALN.
 - **Requires:** Where MAT Learners also have ALN, prepare/maintain IDPs and coordinate support without lowering ambition.
 - **Our stance:** DME (dual/multiple-exceptionality) is planned jointly by MAT Lead and ALNCo; challenge remains visible in IDPs.
 - **Implementation example:** IDPs for DME Learners record high-challenge targets and reviewed evidence of extended outcomes each term.
- Links:** <https://www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-code>

Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 — Part 1 (if independent)

- **Means:** Legal standards for independent schools in Wales; Part 1 sets quality of education expectations.
 - **Requires:** Curriculum policy, schemes of work and assessment must enable suitable challenge and progress for all, including MAT.
 - **Our stance:** Sites show MAT stretch within written curriculum and in lesson evidence; proprietors monitor compliance.
 - **Implementation example:** Annual proprietor report samples MAT attainment/progress and verifies planned extension pathways.
- Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2024/27/contents/made>

Appendix C — Scotland

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning **Highly Able Learners** in Scotland.

Education Scotland — Highly able learners (national resource)

- **Means:** National guidance describing the current terminology (highly able), characteristics and approaches to support.
 - **Requires:** Plan depth and progression for learners working significantly ahead of age-peers; consider social/emotional needs.
 - **Our stance:** Use this as the practical spine for classroom-first provision and staff development.
 - **Implementation example:** Subject leads curate challenge tasks and exemplars aligned to the resource, reviewed termly.
- Links:** <https://education.gov.scot/resources/a-summary-of-resources-relating-to-highly-able-learners/>



How good is our school? (HGIOS4) — Self-evaluation framework

- **Means:** National quality indicators used for self-evaluation/inspection; frames expectations for challenge, progress and equity.
- **Requires:** Evidence planned challenge, learner progress and impact within QIs (e.g., 2.3 Learning, teaching & assessment).
- **Our stance:** Build “highly able” markers into self-evaluation cycles and improvement planning.
- **Implementation example:** Whole-school self-evaluation uses HGIOS4 QIs; SIP includes actions/evidence lines for highly able provision.
- **Links:** <https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/inspection-frameworks/hgios4/>

Supporting Children’s Learning: Code of Practice (ASL) — Statutory guidance

- **Means:** Statutory Code under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act; highly able learners may have ASL entitlements.
 - **Requires:** Coordinate support where high ability coexists with barriers (e.g., Dual or Multiple Exceptional Learners), ensuring access and high expectations.
 - **Our stance:** ASL and high challenge are planned together; records show proportionate support and progression.
 - **Implementation example:** Pupil support files include challenge plans, agreed adjustments, and evidence of accelerated progress.
- Links:** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-code-practice-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland-act-2004-fourth-edition-2026/>

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual’s rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.